



SOUTHERN DOWNS YOUTH COUNCIL (SDYC)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

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1. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Southern Downs Youth Council (SDYC) needs to be read in conjunction with Council's Youth Policy, which is available on Council's website www.sdrc.qld.gov.au.

2. What is the Southern Downs Youth Council?

Southern Downs Regional Council is committed to proactively involving young people through consultation and decision making processes.

Council has established the Southern Downs Youth Council (SDYC) as an advisory committee whose role is to represent the voice of young people who live, work, study or volunteer in the Southern Downs region, to provide input into Council activities and decisions.

3. Purpose

The SDYC program aims to provide young people with opportunities to:

- develop a better understanding of the role and function of local government, our community and local issues;
- 'have a voice' - raise issues, exchange ideas, discuss community issues, provide input in to Council planning, programs and services and influence local government decision making processes; and
- have genuine and regular communication about issues that are important to them directly with the Mayor and Council Officers.

4. Membership

Membership Term

The SDYC is a one (1) year program for Year 10 students. Students will terminate their membership as a SDYC member at the end of their school year.

However, there may be occasions where SDYC members are invited to continue to undertake an official youth council role past the end of their school year, such as at Council or Civic Events like Australia Day, where the new SDYC has not yet commenced its term.

Member Schools will be invited to send Year 9 students who may be interested in nominating for the SDYC along to the final meeting in Term 4 to give them some insight into how the meetings operate.

Membership Structure

The SDYC will comprise up to twenty (20) Year 10 student members, with two (2) members invited from the following schools with Year 10 (or equivalent) representation:

- Allora P-10 State School;
- Assumption College Warwick
- Killarney P-10 State School;
- School of Total Education;
- Scots PGC College;
- Southern Downs FlexiHub;

- Stanthorpe State High School;
- St Joseph's School Stanthorpe;
- Warwick Christian College; and
- Warwick State High School.

In addition, the Mayor will attend each meeting, along with Council personnel as required (e.g. Community Services and Major Projects Department staff). Councillors may attend as observers.

Each member school is invited, at its discretion, to have a staff member accompany the student member to each meeting. The role of the staff member is as an observer and to provide support to the student member if needed.

Parents/guardians are welcome to attend the meetings, particularly if they are transporting their child to/from the meetings.

Responsibilities of the SDYC Student Members

SDYC student members are encouraged to:

- attend all meetings throughout the year;
- voice opinions, provide feedback on and/or suggestions to Council's policies, local laws, services and programs that affect young people;
- act as representatives from their school and community;
- act as a liaison between Council and young people;
- attend and observe a Southern Downs Regional Council General Meeting; and
- attend and/or participate in civic ceremonies/meetings/events/functions (when invited).

All members are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and respectful manner, and to wear their school uniform to meetings and when representing Youth Council at events, unless otherwise advised.

5. Nomination and Appointment of Youth Council Student Members

Nomination

Each Southern Downs' school with Year 10 (or equivalent) students will be invited to nominate two (2) Year 10 (or equivalent) students to represent their school on the SDYC. Nomination is encouraged, but not mandatory.

The member school is encouraged to undertake their own internal vetting process in order to determine their Year 10 student nominee/s.

The nominations are to be completed by the school using the *Southern Downs Youth Council Nomination and Consent Form*, in agreement with the nominated Year 10 (or equivalent) students, and with parental or guardian consent.

Completion of the *Nomination and Consent Form* by the Member School confirms the school's nomination of the student and is deemed to provide consent for the student to participate in media activities relating to Youth Council as a representative of the school generally as outlined in section

4 of the form, subject to consent by the student's parent/guardian. However, it is also accepted that there may be occasions where the Member School's media protocols require additional media permissions, and Council will work with the school in this circumstance.

The nominations must be received by Council by the specified return date and all nominations from the member schools will be accepted without condition.

Appointment

Southern Downs Regional Council's Mayor will approve and appoint all nominees as members of the SDYC.

Following approval by the Mayor, each student member will receive a letter confirming their appointment to the SDYC. The member school will also be notified.

Student members will be officially welcomed by Council during the induction workshop, and will receive their SDYC name badges.

6. Meetings

Frequency of Meetings

The SDYC will generally meet five (5) times throughout the year. This includes one (1) induction workshop and four (4) official meetings; one held each school term.

Where it is able to be accommodated, the induction workshop will be held at a venue in close proximity and coinciding with a General Meeting of Council, and prior to the first official SDYC meeting. The workshop will provide an opportunity for student members to get to know one another in a relaxed environment. This will also provide an opportunity for members to meet the Mayor and Councillors, and Council officers.

The official SDYC meetings will be held throughout the year during school hours. Each SDYC meeting will run for a period of up to three (3) hours, and this includes time for an informal gathering before the official meeting.

The informal gathering of members will enable them to discuss ideas and issues, and the meeting agenda, in a relaxed environment prior to commencement of the formal meeting. The informal gathering will run for approximately 30 minutes.

The final meeting of the year may run for a period of up to five (5) hours to allow for the informal gathering, the official meeting, a program review, followed by an end of program celebration lunch.

A schedule of SDYC meetings will be developed. This will take into consideration the Mayor's commitments and, where possible, will avoid the last two (2) to three (3) weeks of each school term in consideration of exam and assessment periods. The meeting schedule will be accepted by majority agreement with the member schools.

If required, additional meetings may be convened by agreement as follows:

- During school hours, by agreement of member schools, SDYC members and the Mayor; or
- Outside school hours, by agreement of SDYC members, their parents or guardians and the Mayor.

Hosting of Meetings by Member Schools

To foster a sense of ownership by student members, their schools and local community, and to enable accessibility, the SDYC meetings will be held in the member school locations of Warwick, Stanthorpe, Killarney and Allora.

Council encourages and invites the SDYC member schools to host the SDYC meetings on a rotational basis each year, with the majority of schools to host a meeting over a two to three-year period.

There are a range of benefits and opportunities that may arise from member schools hosting the SDYC meetings including, but not limited to:

- enabling the Mayor and Councillors to develop closer ties with each school community;
- fostering and building on inter-school connections and relationships;
- showcasing their school and enabling the school and their student representatives to have a host school item for discussion and consideration in the meeting agenda; and
- providing access to other students at the host school to attend and view the meetings, offering some insight into democracy in action.

Location of Meetings

The official SDYC meetings will be held in the following locations, and hosted on a rotational basis with the ten (10) member schools as follows:

- Warwick (shared between Assumption College, Southern Downs Flex-Hub, The School of Total Education, The Scots PGC College, Warwick Christian College and Warwick State High School);
- Stanthorpe (shared between Stanthorpe State High School and St Joseph's School);
- Killarney (Killarney P-10 State School); and
- Allora (Allora P-10 State School).

If a SDYC member school is unable to host a SDYC meeting, another member school will be offered the host role. If no member school can host the SDYC meeting, the meeting will be held at Council's Administration Centre in Stanthorpe or Warwick.

Transport

When meetings are to be held outside the geographic school location of the SDYC student members, member schools are encouraged to provide transport assistance to their student representatives to attend meetings. However, where this is not possible, and where a parent/guardian is unable to provide transport, arrangements may be made with Council's Community Services and Major Projects Department for authorised Council personnel to transport student members, having regard to the relevant school's permission process. In this case, there would be two Council personnel with Positive Notice Blue Cards, travelling with a student member at all times.

Access via Technology

While it is preferred that student members attend the SDYC meetings in person, where physical attendance is not possible, Council staff will consider the possibility of using available technology and applications such as 'Skype' or tele/video-conferencing facilities to virtually connect student members to the SDYC meeting.

Format of Meetings

The SDYC meetings will be chaired by the Mayor, and a Council officer will undertake secretariat duties.

Each meeting will normally consist of:

- Host School Tour (optional);
- Welcome and Open;
- Present, Apologies, Confirmation of Minutes;
- Actions from Previous Meeting;
- Host School and Youth Council Items;
- Mayor's Update;
- General Business; and
- Civic or Council Event Opportunities.

The meetings will be an opportunity for the Mayor or Councillors to attend and receive views and opinions on matters relevant to the SDYC.

Council staff are not permitted to vote, move or second recommendations, but can contribute advice during discussions on any subject.

Member school staff and Councillors retain an observer role and are not permitted to vote.

Notice of attendance or apology will be required prior to each meeting.

Quorum

The quorum for the SDYC will be half the number of members of the SDYC, plus one.

Decision making of the SDYC will be primarily decided by a majority vote. Where a quorum is not present at a meeting, decisions will be either carried over to the following meeting or made at the discretion of Council's Community Services and Major Projects Department or the Mayor.

7. Support

Council staff will provide resources, assistance, guidance and support to SDYC members. This support will include coordinating the meetings with the host schools, including access to technology as required.

8. Reporting

The SDYC primary reporting relationship will be to the Community Development Officer - Youth and Engagement, in Council's Community Services and Major Projects Department.

The SDYC will report regularly on its activities, provide Council with its guidance and/or make recommendations to Council through the provision of the SDYC meeting minutes to Council.

The minutes of each SDYC meeting will be submitted to the General Council Meeting following the SDYC meeting.

SDYC student members are also encouraged to report back to their schools and their cohort, and to discuss with their schools and cohort topics or issues for tabling in the SDYC agendas for discussion at the meetings.